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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, UY
SUBJ: REGIONALLY FOCUSSED SPEECHES ON HUMAN RIGHTS
REF: STATE 176956

1. PER REFTEL, EMBASSY SUBMITS FOLLOWING DRAFT OF SUGGESTED COMMENTS ON URUGUAYAN SITUATION FOR POSSIBLE INCLUSION IN SPEECH ON LATIN AMERICAN REGION BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN.

2. QUOTE. WE HAVE BEEN PLEASED TO NOTE DURING 1978 AN EMERGING TREND TOWARD IMPROVEMENT IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF URUGUAY. THERE APPEARS TO BE A GROWING OFFICIAL RECOGNITION THAT THE "WAR AGAINST SUBVERSION" -- WHICH ONCE POSED A LEGITIMATE AND SIGNIFICANT THREAT -- HAS NOW BEEN WON. THERE HAS BEEN A SHARP REDUCTION IN REPORTS OF NEW ARRESTS AND MISTREATMENT OF DETAINEES. THE NATION'S MILITARY LEADERS HAVE FORMALLY COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO A TIMETABLE FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE, AND HAVE PLEDGED AN END TO THE PRESENT STATE OF EMERGENCY. WHEN IMPLEMENTED, THIS SHOULD GO FAR TO RECREATE THE CLIMATE OF CIVIL GUARANTEES FOR WHICH URUGUAY HAS BEEN JUSTLY HONORED IN THE PAST.

3. WE HAVE ALSO NOTED A NEW CLIMATE OF SERIOUSNESS IN

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URUGUAY'S RESPONSE TO CRITICISM FROM ABROAD. A MISSION OF DISTINGUISHED JURISTS REPRESENTING THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION WAS RECEIVED IN APRIL AND ACCORDED FULL COOPERATION BY URUGUAYAN AUTHORITIES. THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS, WHICH CRITICIZED THE PRESENT LACK OF LEGAL GUARANTEES, WERE PUBLISHED IN FULL IN THE COUNTRY'S LEADING DAILIES. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL INDICATED A RECEPTIVENESS TO FOLLOWING THROUGH ON THESE RECOMMENDATIONS.

4. THIS PAST JUNE, AT THE VIII OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN WASHINGTON, URUGUAY IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THE LAST OASGA, SHOWED A NEW WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, AND THIS WAS REFLECTED IN THE ASSEMBLY'S RESOLUTION ON URUGUAY. FINALLY, WE UNDERSTAND THAT URUGUAY HAS OFFERED TO RENEW RELATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, AN ORGANIZATION CONCERNED WITH THE WELFARE OF POLITICAL AND OTHER PRISONERS.

5. WE CAN NOT TAKE CREDIT FOR THESE DEVELOPMENTS, NOR DO WE WISH TO. THE URUGUAYAN AUTHORITIES HAVE DONE WHAT THEY

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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HAVE DONE, INDEPENDENT OF OURSELVES, FOR THEIR OWN REASONS AND AT THEIR OWN TIME. WE ARE SURE THEIR FUTURE ACTIONS WILL BE MARKED BY THIS SAME INDEPENDENCE. THE ROLE OF AMERICA'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY IN ALL OF THIS IS, THEREFORE, IMPOSSIBLE TO MEASURE, BUT WE BELIEVE NONETHELESS THAT IT HAS MADE A REAL CONTRIBUTION. OUR EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE GROWING URUGUAYAN AWARENESS OF THE NECESSITY TO BRING ITS PRESENT STATE OF EMERGENCY TO AN EARLY AND HUMANE END. AMERICA'S CONCERN WITH HUMAN RIGHTS HAS REINFORCED THE COLLECTIVE CONSCIENCE OF THE WORLD. THIS HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY TRUE IN URUGUAY, A COUNTRY JUSTLY FAMED FOR ITS OWN DEMOCRATIC CONSCIENCE AND FOR ITS LONG TRADITION OF RESPECT FOR, AND FURTHERANCE OF, HUMAN RIGHTS. THE PEOPLE OF URUGUAY, AND
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ESPECIALLY ITS YOUTH- HAVE RESPONDED WITH A SYMPATHETIC APPRECIATION OF AMERICA UNEQUALLED SINCE THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY DURING WORLD WAR II. UNQUOTE.
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